

Illinois Prairie Path Dedication Held

Dedication of 23 miles of the 30-mile Illinois Prairie Path as a National Trail took place Sunday, Nov. 7, at the Annual Meeting of the Illinois Prairie Path at the Morton Arboretum.

John Cherry, acting director of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation of the U.S. Department of the Interior, spoke of the achievement of the Illinois Prairie Path Board of Directors in its effort to preserve the former C.A. & E. right-of-way as a recreation trail.

Cherry, who made three field inspection trips on the Prairie Path, said he had a special feeling for the Path, for its beauty and interest, and for the hard work and persistence it represented in overcoming the many difficulties encountered.

Stating that the Prairie Path exemplified the objectives of the U.S. Department of the Interior under the National Trails Act of 1968, Cherry said the Path is a living monument to concerned people to preserve their heritage.

Praising the DuPage County Board for its far-sighted purchase of the C.A. & E. property, Cherry said they deserved thanks for leasing the property to the Illinois Prairie Path and contributing to its development.

May T. Watts, Chairman of the Illinois Prairie Path Board of Directors, was then presented with the certificate, signed by Secretary of the Interior, Rogers Morton, officially including the ten miles from Wheaton to Elmhurst in the Prairie Path's National status.

Following the presentation of the prized certificate, May T. Watts unveiled the emblem bearing the legend "Illinois Prairie Path - U.S.A. - National Trails System."

Guest speaker, Henry Barkhausen, Director of the Illinois Department of Conservation, congratulated the Illinois Prairie Path for its achievement saying that it was a remarkable model of conservation to the state. Also mentioning the pending extension of the Prairie Path into Kane County, he referred to it as a fine example of cooperation between officials and amateurs.

Miss Helen Turner, reporting on the Illinois Prairie Path progress through the past year, pointed out three main areas of achievement: 1. Recognition of the Prairie Path as a National Trail; 2. Anticipated extension of the Path 10 miles into Kane County; 3. Development of the Path itself.

Enlarging on the Prairie Path development, Miss Turner stated that more than half of the Path's surface had been improved for hiking, bicycle and horseback riding. Garden clubs and municipalities had planted trees in needed areas. And new signs had been erected including caution signs at highway and railroad crossings, directional signs, and portage signs showing temporary routes.

Other improvements, Miss Turner said, included rustic fences placed at Prairie Path entrances in Elmhurst, a picnic area developed in Villa Park, trash containers planned for Wheaton, and the removal of the vandalized bridge over the East DuPage river now replaced by a low-level foot bridge.

Miss Turner also announced that the Northern Illinois Gas Company has granted Prairie Path passage on its easement to allow linkage with the Batavia branch where it was interrupted by the East-West Tollway. This plus previously granted use of Commonwealth Edison easements guarantees Prairie Path continuity.

Citing special examples of fund raising benefiting the Prairie Path, Miss Turner mentioned the Christmas Tree sale last December sponsored by the Robert Glenn family, Wayne, and a "Gravel Gertie" breakfast in Warrenville.

Guided nature walks on the Prairie Path continue to be special features of Prairie Path activity and the Annual walk in October attracted 279 participants.

Looking to the future, Miss Turner sees, hopefully, the extension of the Prairie Path from the Desplaines river to the Fox River.



Clipped By:

adna48411

Fri, Aug 6, 2021